

**Governor's Commission to Review and Advise on Services Related to At-Risk  
Youth in New Hampshire**

**February 6, 2015  
Rooms 206-208 Legislative Office Building  
Concord, New Hampshire**

**Commission Members in Attendance:** Geoffrey Souther; Mary Steady; David Dionne; Karen Purse; Evelyn Clark Smith; Martha Kane; Michael Skibbie; Nicole Rodler; Michael Adamkowski; Nick Toumpas, Commissioner, DHHS (ex-officio). (See full membership list at end of minutes.)

**Commission Members Absent:** Judge James Carroll; Note: the three legislative members were not yet appointed by the time of this meeting.

**Others in Attendance:** Amy Kennedy, Policy Director, Office of Governor Maggie Hassan; Mary Ann Cooney, Associate Commissioner (DHHS); Byry Kennedy (DHHS); Jay Ward, SEA-NH; Keith Kuenning, Child & Family Services;

**I. Call to order**

Commissioner Nick Toumpas called the meeting to order at 10:03 am by welcoming members of the Commission and the public in attendance.

**II. Welcome from Commissioner Toumpas**

Commissioner Toumpas advised the Commission that the three legislative Commission members have not yet been appointed. Governor Hassan's Executive Order requires one appointment from the State Senate, and two from the House of Representatives. Commissioner Toumpas hopes that those members will be appointed before the next meeting.

Commissioner Toumpas gave a brief overview of the mission and charge of the state Department of Health and Human Services. The New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services' mission is to promote health and independence for the people of New Hampshire, and they achieve their goals through the work with other partners and organizations.

**III. Review of Executive Order 2014-8**

Commissioner Toumpas provided a review of Governor Maggie Hassan's Executive Order (2014-8). Commission members are to serve three year terms, and legislative members will serve co-terminous to their terms in office. The Executive Order requires the Commission to meet six times per year, and Commissioner Toumpas recommended that the Commission meet once monthly initially.

Commissioner Toumpas reviewed the duties of the Commission provided in the Executive Order.

#### **IV. Election of Acting Chair**

Given the four members absent, Commissioner Toumpas made a motion to allow for an Acting Chair of the Commission until the entire membership is present and can vote on the Chair. Commissioner Toumpas explained the responsibilities of Acting Chair: call the next meeting and open nominations for the permanent Chair.

Commission member Geoff Souther nominated himself as Acting Chair until full membership is present.

Commission member Mike Adamkowski seconded the nomination. There was no discussion and the nomination was approved unanimously.

Acting Chair Souther opened the floor for discussion by Commission members. Commission members discussed what information is helpful to the Commission for initial review prior to beginning their work. Documents requested by Commission members include:

- Data collection report required in 2014's HB1624 (RSA 169-B:31-b Data Collection; Reporting Requirement)
- Juvenile justice services report in 2014's HB1624 (RSA 215:27)
- Outside assessment of the NH Division for Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF), juvenile field services, and the Sununu Youth Services Center (SYSC), conducted by the Council of Juvenile Correctional Administrators
- Final report done by NH DCYF on alternative uses for the SYSC, conducted in 2014
- Trends in juvenile caseloads, provided by NH Courts
- Daily activity schedule for youth at SYSC (provided by Commission member Evelyn Clark Smith)

Commission member Evelyn Clark Smith inquired as to what information from the Sununu Youth Services Center she can provide as input, and if the Commission will make rules and policies. There was a discussion of what information should be brought to the Commission, and the role of the Commission to review and advise. Commission members expressed interest in reviewing policies related to the six month discharge policy at the SYSC, along with trends with population of juvenile offenders and the various initiatives required of the DHHS with regarding to this population (example: age of majority, solution based casework, treatment delivery, etc.).

Commission member Purse shared a personal story about her child and the need for more counseling options.

Commission member Steady shared a desire for a review of policies across agency connections and the essential cross collaboration between the NH DHHS and Department of Education, including what intervention supports are needed and a focus on prevention with younger children in the schools.

Commission member Rodler discussed her perspectives in gaps in services, stronger family mandates, system reentry, and law enforcement concerns regarding the change in age of majority.

Commission member Skibbie offered to do an orientation at the next meeting on the juvenile system and a briefing on the statutes impacting this population.

**V. Public Comment**

No discussion from the public.

**VI. Next Steps**

Acting Chair Souther offered to send the reports requested above to Commission members via the DHHS e-studio program. Amy Kennedy will also put those reports online once a website is established.

Acting Chair Souther offered a tour of the SYSC to the Commission members.

The Commission members agreed to meet next on March 6, 2015 at 11 am. The location will be sent to members and noticed to the public.

Acting Chair Souther moved to adjourn the meeting. Commission member Adamkowski seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 11:06 am.